



Study Skills for Parents of College-Bound Kids

Every student needs a different sort of conversation, nudging, kick in the pants, policing, etc. to make maximum use of their improved study skills, but here are a few principles that parents have found helpful to keep in mind when helping students achieve their greatest goals:

Homework

1. When kids get home from school, they're tired, hungry, and need to use the bathroom. After that, they get dumber by the minute until they wake up smart again the next day. Because of this, they should do their homework ASAP after getting home, and do the hardest stuff first.
 - Parents can help by providing an after-school snack that kids can eat on their way home from school, to minimize the potential for snack-related, distraction-induced downtime during the waning brainpower hours.
2. For kids who get home late on account of practice, rehearsal, or similar, life is really hard because doing homework with a belly full of dinner at the end of a grueling day is really hard.
 - Parents can help by either (a) having dinner ready right when kids get home, or (b) making sure kids leave the house with enough food that they can comfortably do an hour of homework before dinner when they get home.

Science of Learning

1. You have to enjoy the subject and look forward to learning it before sitting down to do the work.
 - Parents can help by modeling this positive outlook, even for subjects that parents found intimidating when they were in school: for example by sharing the funnest stuff they know about their students' course material, or the two or three unresolved questions they've always had about those topics.
2. You must constantly connect the subject with other stuff that you already know and care about.
 - Parents can help by modeling this act of making connections: by sharing what this new stuff reminds them of, or how it relates to their seemingly unrelated interests.
3. To actually learn anything on any useful level, you have to quiz yourself regularly, preferably with study guides of your own design, but not so frequently that you already remember everything from the last time you quizzed yourself.
 - Parents can help by quizzing students with the study guides they've made, to gauge whether students have simply learned which topics are going to be on the test, or actually mastered all the topics to the level of detail required for long-lasting learning.

Big-Picture

1. Grades are illusory and entirely not the point. The point is learning how to learn, so that when students finally get the opportunity to learn whatever they want to, in college or beyond, they're ready to take full advantage.
 - Parents can help by focusing on the process of improving student learning skills, rather than grades.
2. These days, high school is twice as much work as college, hours-wise.
 - Parents can help by remembering that the high school experience is a highly contrived gauntlet that often requires more support than parents remember needing when they were students.

Better grades in less time.

